The Three Goods of Higher Education; as Education, in its Educative and in its Institutional Practices[1]

Abstract

Although there has been considerable debate in contemporary literature on the erosion of the public good in higher education, most of it has been concentrated on the word 'public' rather than on the notion of 'good'. Further, the idea of higher education and the organisations for its delivery have become conflated through a focus on the 'good' as inherent, intrinsic and instrumental. An idea is proposed, developed from a framework devised by Audi (2004): that higher education is intrinsically good; that aspects of its practice are feasibly inherently good; and institutional practices are instrumentally good. These three goods are commonly conflated rather than interwoven in our policymakers' understanding of the contribution that higher education has for human flourishing and what contribution higher education providers make to the economics of society.

In this paper, I investigate the difference between the essential nature of education and its systematic delivery through providers of higher education. I do this using notions of good in terms of what good higher education might be, what might be good pedagogical practice and what can be expected as good of the practices of an institutional provider. In doing so I draw a distinction between the functionality and corporate nature of the university as a higher education provider with its financial accountability to government and other stakeholders, its educative rather than administrative practices, its ability to facilitate its students' flourishing and its contribution in terms of a public good to the wider community. As Barnett states, 'higher education is both a concept and a complex social institution containing manifold practice' (2014: 21). I want to suggest that higher education as a concept should not be considered as synonymous with universities (as in current UK law) or other formalised institutional providers, and I do so through a discussion of 'goods'.

Basic premise

The two basic premises of this paper are:

That the contested notions of 'education' and what is determined as 'higher education', albeit overlapping concepts of flourishing, are different from the institutions devised to provide this education.

That there is a distinction between instrumental good, in that it is a means to achieve some other good, and goods which are good in themselves. In this second group, following Audi, I introduce a nuanced difference within goods in themselves by suggesting there are intrinsic goods which are

[1] I am grateful for the comments made by the reviewers of editors of this paper which have improved it considerablely.

something that is a permanent and essential characteristic attribute of the thing, and inherent good which belongs as part of the thing while not being one of it salient features.

This paper takes education as a learning process linked to personal development: intellectual, psychological, emotional and social. It is about flourishing and realising potential within the constraints of context. As a learning process, it brings about change in a person's thinking and capacity to do things, and helps people to come to terms with doubt. A more detailed definition is both ambiguous and contested (Carr, 2003): it is existential and involves life-changing experiences, and forms of it can be codified in qualifications, as measurable outputs, from the experience of institutional education; but essentially its occurrence is not reliant on qualifications.

The United Kingdom classifies education in a tertiary sequential process, with the first two compulsory cycles concerned with socialisation explored in in terms of curriculum, values and control through assessment, and third phase higher and further education. Herethe dominate discourse, but not exclusive, is skills to realise employment opportunities and enrich the economy. As the Universities Minister states "Higher education is first and foremost education, and not all the benefits of education can or should be captured in future salary" (7.6.2018). Yet, formal definitions of higher education conflate higher education as a term manifest in a credential such as a degree, tying it to the provider that delivers that credential. The 1998 Education Reform Act also defines higher education in Section 120(1) by reference to a list of courses in Schedule 6 of the Act. This is extended in the 2017 Higher Education and Research Act, which defines higher education as 'education provided by means of higher education courses' (2017: Section 83 (1). Indeed, Barnett (2017) follows this approach of aligning higher education with the university when he proposes a social philosophy of higher education as the social philosophy of the university.

The difference is surely more subtle than that, for the idea of higher education must precede the formation of courses designed to incorporate it and upon which higher education providers and higher education regulators set their frameworks. Indeed, as Brubacher (1977) and Barnett (2014) reveal, among the shifting conceptions of higher education there is a broad consensus around the underlying nature of higher learning that 'seems to possess features of complexity, worthwhileness, elusivity and options' (2014: 9). These are seen in the descriptors of the standardised levels of qualification frameworks, and this suggests that higher education is manifest in critical reasoning based on analysis, levels of specific knowledge and skills of communication, leadership and cooperation. It can be contextualised in qualifications yet also in ways of being.

Higher education providers are places where the practices of higher education pedagogy are shaped and delivered under the prevailing social and political demands. These practices are therefore tailored to the demands of the context in which higher education is viewed, and change over time. Currently they are foregrounded in consumer logic and employability.

This differs from, and can be contrasted with, the two major concepts of higher education that were promoted in Europe in the late eighteenth century by Humboldt and Newman. These

shaped the institutions of the university, especially up to the point of their massification (Trow 2010). For Humboldt, the central legacy is a form of personal flourishing or *Bildung*, a cultural flourishing that became the central Humboldtian principle for the 'union of teaching through research in the work of individual scholars'. Humboldt wrote: '(W)e demand that *Bildung*, wisdom and virtue, as powerfully and universally propagated as possible, should prevail under its aegis, that it augments its inner worth to such an extent that the concept of humanity, if taken from its example alone, would be of a rich and worthy substance' (W)e demand that *Bildung*, wisdom and virtue, as powerfully and universally propagated as possible, should prevail under its aegis, Humboldt, 2000: 59).

For Newman, the university was a space for self-development and engagement, a process of intrinsic awakening that served society in that it was to develop a notion of common good and be able to question those who wished to totalise debate and discussion. He famously wrote in the *Idea of a University*:

> I protest to you, Gentlemen, that if I had to choose between a so-called University, which dispensed with residence and tutorial superintendence, and gave its degrees to any person who passed an examination in a wide range of subjects, and a University which had no professors or examinations at all, but merely brought a number of young men together for three or four years... if I must determine which of the two courses was the most successful in training, moulding, enlarging the mind... which produced better public men, men of the world... I have no hesitation in giving the preference to the university which did nothing, over that which exacted of its members an acquaintance with every science under the sun. (Newman, 1996: 105)

Newman draws a distinction between the concept of education and its institutionalisation, and the concerns that this might create. Similar thoughts are found in Oakeshott, who suggests that the graduating student would have 'acquired some knowledge, and, more important, a certain discipline of mind, a grasp of consequences, a greater command over his power' (2001: 115). He or she would have moved beyond the 'intellectual hooligan' and be 'expected to be able to look for some meaning in the things that have greatly moved mankind' (ibid.).

This distinction that all three make seems more blurred in the contemporary university, where the narrative, at least of government, is not the importance of the good in and of itself, but an external end, be it economic self-interest, national unity or subservience to powerful others. I take this description and seek to understand it through the notion of the form of good.

I see higher education and the university (or any other institution which functions to deliver higher education) as two domains—of the university qua *institution* and qua *edifying experience*—as separate, even if seen as interacting. If the university presents itself as an investment opportunity, as it does currently,, this may lead to certain kinds of practices within the university that privilege goals, such as skills training and CV writing within its curricula, creating a form of codified higher

education as a simulacrum for employment and income. To achieve these goals, other institutional functions such as employer engagement, efficient resource allocation and customer satisfaction reshape the university as a mere actor in a marketplace. Under contemporary conditions, a degree holder enters a market of credits where education is assessed by a notion of value for money, and this is determined by the external values that these credentials can command. In doing so, the flourishing of the individual is dominated by his or her financial welfare. The university responds to its market by providing a form of institutionalised higher education and aligned practices that enable it to satisfy the demands made upon it. Indeed, it can be argued that its function has, to a greater or less extent, always been this, yet the expansion of participation has made it more explicit.

The lens of the good

To investigate the conflation suggested above, I use the notion of 'good' as an inherent, intrinsic, instrumental concept, following the distinction made by Audi (2004) in his book *The Good in the Right*. The basic premise of this argument is based on Audi's distinction of good, applied to higher education as an instrumental good and a good in itself. In this latter category there are two interlinked but separate elements: intrinsic and inherent good. 'The inherent which are in a sense dependent goods and the intrinsic, which as the proper end of the former are "more final" (ibid., 126). Intrinsic good is good in its own right, and 'one is commuted to taking it to provide a reason for action' (2004: 130).

If education is an intrinsic good, then one should seek to educate oneself and others as a self-evident good. Inherent good contains intrinsic properties, which are revealed when we 'appropriately experience' (ibid.: 128), revealing the good as an educative practice. Thus, goods are not independent of their experience, and so differ from intrinsic good as providing reasons for action. Moore himself distinguishes between the whole and the parts in his principle of organic unities: '*the value of a whole must not be assumed to be the same as the sum of the values of its parts*' (original italics, 2000: 79). Audi suggest that there is a further distinction between values of instrumental good and those which are good in themselves.

Does good in itself have any meaning?

When we say that education is good, we tend to be making an assertion of its intrinsic good and, at the same time, endorsing it as a good for something. Yet, as Reid suggests, asking what education is good for is a conceptual error: it is to treat something that is intrinsically valuable as if it were instrumentally valuable—as if it were good only as a means to some independently specifiable end (1998: 319-340). My concern here is not, however, whether education is in itself constitutes moral worth or moral goodness for I accept that it does, but with the state of affairs that makes goodness a thing that is worthy of choice.

Whether we think that higher education is dominantly good for the individual in a sense of prudence and self-interest or in a moral sense of supporting the common good of the community depends on our understandings of good and of higher education, both of which are contested, as we

have seen above. Does education have intrinsic good value, such as beauty, truth and knowledge have, in that this good implies that something that is good gives reason to make it happen? If so, then it is incumbent upon societies and humanity, as the right thing to do, to enable all to benefit from it. Moreover, it implies that what is intrinsically good is a fitting object of desire and, as Lemos states (2009: 9), involves having an adequate idea of something (this is discussed in terms of Audi's appropriateness). Or. should we consider education or a credentialised form of it good in the sense that it attracts value? If so, then clearly the answer is yes, for its worth in the credentialised form can be measured by external criteria (money, pleasure, power), and the provider of education undertakes this transformative function and tries to sustain the value of so doing.

So, when we say that education is good for an enhanced chance of employment, we imply that we support educative activities that bring rewards first to the individual and then to others; when we say that art is good, we support a more general aesthetic that it is good for all those able to appreciate it; and when we say that education has a common good, we mean that it has an intrinsic value that enhances the good of the community. When we talk of education as a good in this way, we might be endorsing a notion of human flourishing. This meaning is distinct from a goal of economic prosperity and has its meaning not in terms of functionality but as an absolute good, in the same way that justice is good. This is not to deny that other things may be good and that they might be comparatively more significant in certain circumstances or, indeed, that something might have properties of goodness yet not be good. Clearly, good serves a meaningful function when used to describe higher education and its providers, but can we be clear on what it means by clearing some of its ambiguity?

What is good

We might say that the word 'good' is semantically entangled. In doing so, we 'grasp the meaning of "good" by understanding what would count as an argument for or against something's being good. And we understand that by understanding, first, that what counts as an argument depends in part on what sort of thing is being evaluated' (Clark 2002: 32). We might consider this in a person: their type of conduct, an outcome, a character trait, a sensation, a reputation or an intellect; and understand the relevance of such things that have intrinsic value as patience, fairness, thoughtfulness and perseverance to the evaluation of character, and so on. In this picture, one can form well-grounded judgements that a person's character is flawed or sound in some respect, or that a person has acted well or badly on certain occasions.

There is a plethora of other ethical philosophies, but in contemporary literature this issue is chiefly recognised in Moore's ethical theory of value, which is probably the most influential contemporary axiology of good that has been developed. Moore famously asserts that such goodness is the only reason to justify action for, if it is not good, we are not justified in pursuing it. However, Moore states that: '"Good" then, if we mean by it that quality which we assert to belong to a thing, when we say that the thing is good, is incapable of any definition' (2000: 62). It is *intrinsically good.*

Moore, indeed, is very clear in his *Ethics* (written after *Principia Ethica*), where he suggests that good has three potentialities: it can be intrinsically good; it can, to various degrees, be the intrinsic whole of something (that which I assume is best referred to as inherently good); and thirdly it can, to various degrees, be useful through generating good effects. Moore points to potential for confusion, for we use 'good' in all three senses, and often interchangeably. The argument that Moore goes on to make is that things might be wholly or partially intrinsically good and have useful effects, yet might not thus create the distinction that he wishes to highlight. As he succinctly puts it, 'nothing is commoner than to find people asking of a good thing: what use is it? And concluding that, if is no use, it cannot be any good'[2] (*Ethics*, 2013: 117). Yet this utilitarian notion of good as functionality is necessarily dependent on external powers, powers that an educated person, with or without credentials, can question.

Making such judgements is dependent on our norms and the political collectives present, which we assimilate when we are thrown into this world at birth; as we become educated of the world and through which we reveal our potential. To make choices, we need to be able to make these norms explicit and to evaluate what is settled upon as standards in terms of, say, flourishing and well-being. Questioning these norms comes from appreciating what they are and what they stand for. The ability to do this is a contributing factor in being educated, and bears a relationship to higher education. Should flourishing be taken as an endorsed form of those societal norms, it denies autonomy, for we might claim that no system of values can be binding on someone unless they choose to make them so and, to do so, they must have the capability to do so. This point leads me to deny that what is good in terms of flourishing, so defined, is necessarily intrinsically good, notwithstanding that this failure can lead to materially and culturally impoverished lives, yet lives that, when freely chosen and not destructive of others in that they prevent freedom of their choice, are intrinsically good. If this is done, then an intrinsic good that might replace it is an idea of what is good in terms of what one envisions one's life to be: not as an isolated actor within the flex of society but as a member of any particular society whose intentions are good, benign and, as such, not evil. These require our educative insights and, in order to bring these to bear, it might be argued that one has to have taken a stance on one's life. Having taken that stance, an informed, appreciative, notion of what is intrinsically good will motivate one's agency follows.[3]

Goods of higher education

Making informed choices leads me to how the good might be applied to higher education and, indeed, whether higher education offers or has ever offered anything other than instrumental goods. Can education be considered outside of the practice that delivers it? Is the intrinsic good not in education but in the flourishing or contentment that it can lead to? For instance, as Ozolin suggests,

[2] The opposite, applying to bad values and uses.
[3] I have gone further elsewhere and argued that this stance ought to lead to one's contentment, suggesting that higher education can play a part in this.

'it is not possible to maintain that education is intrinsically good because it is about the development of the whole person, if it is intrinsically good because it contributes to the growth of business and the economy' (2013: 158). Indeed, this is the essence of education that might be conceived by Newman, Peters or White: that the objective of education is to widen our understanding of the world, to allow one to appreciate it better and to transform the educated person's perspective of the world.

In these senses, it is feasible to argue that the practice of education is inherently good, for it enables the emergence of the intrinsic values of flourishing and contentment through the 'expansion of the mind'. It does this for the intrinsic good of the self, yet does so in forms that are culturally relevant and so, as such, it is not an intrinsic good in and of itself.[4] Yet it is concerned with the mutually contradictory expectations of self and the others that it allows. Also, educative practices can be applied to activities that are indeed evil, as in the development of criminals, terrorists and other malfeasants.

One needs to be tighter on the terms applied to education where it is institutional and where there are many forms of the practice that may be associated with education in terms of the structures that it takes. Education, therefore, is not marked only by what might occur at a university or the outcomes of the provider. To this end, the next section considers education as a practice within the constraints of higher education providers.

Education as an institutional practice

Notwithstanding my earlier comments that higher education is not institution-bound, I want now to consider education when it is, as in the case of higher education providers. Much has been written about the common or public good of higher education, and I do not want to rehearse the argument here or comment on the shifts in focus in educational policy, as this has been done well by others (see Jonathan, 1997; Nixon, 2012; Marginson, 2011; Williams, 2016). The public good, at its best, 'ties universities into a larger process of democratisation and human development' (Marginson, 2011: 418). This has resonance with Nixon, who suggests that the public good is 'a common commitment to social justice and equality' (2012: 1). In essence, it alludes to activities that refer to benefits or resources that are accessible to all. In this form, it 'includes better informed citizens leading to improved democracy and a more inclusive society and knowledge conceived of as an end in itself through participation in HE [higher education] rather than its outcomes' (Williams, 2016: 622).

Defining public goods in this way envisions them as the end products or commodities produced by the higher education sector, while noting that they may be intangible and take either a collective or an individual form. Nixon (2012) considers the goods of higher education as human

[4] This raises the issue of the right to education, which I will discuss in another section.

capability, human reasoning and human purpose. In this form, education is seen primarily as a means to the production of social or economic capital. Education functionality has no end in itself, other than developing a more economically productive workforce, and risks seeing a public good as no more than the aggregation of self-interest—a neo-liberal and rights-based approach that potentially disavows civic and communal obligation. Indeed, Nixon considers that public good continues to rest on the assumption that strong democratic societies require educated and informed publics that are both inclusive and questioning: 'Within such societies, knowledge is the most public of all public goods—and education, therefore, is an indispensable resource, the benefits of which cut across a range of public interests and concerns' (2017: 1).

Do institutional practices differ from educational practice within them? And can they enhance the public good as Nixon suggests? To address this, I have selected the not-for-profit part of higher education, as this is voluntarily undertaken, normally by adults, and involves the public as stakeholders and often as funders. Is higher education more than a consumeristic activity intended as a means of improving consumption activity? Is it, or ought it to be, a transformative activity with its own intrinsic values? Should it seek onto-epistemological change based on learning as an ever-evolving triadic interplay between teachers, learners and that which calls to be learned? It is best served by academics who care and can be trusted to reach a level of competency that enables them to retain the trust of the public. In this sense, the practice of education, rather than merely teaching, is aligned with MacIntyre's notion of practice that has good as internal to that form of activity, such as in the 'enquiries of physics, chemistry and biology' (2007: 187). For MacIntyre, a practice is not just a set of technical skills upon which undesirable central control is hidden in the simulacra of a notion of professional status as may be laid down by institutions, such as universities. For they are 'characteristically and necessarily concerned with external goods; they are structured in terms of power and status, and they distribute money, power and status as rewards (2007: 194).[5] By distinctively aligning practice with internal (intrinsic goods) and institutions with external goods, although this is contested (e.g. Smith, 2003; Hager, 2011), MacIntyre offers us a framework on which to consider the complex notion of value inherent in not just teaching *per se* but in public higher education. The benefit on the 'private dimension has both intrinsic and exchange value, and benefit on the public dimension has both inherent and instrumental value' (Jonathan, 1997: 59). However, pressure is being applied by governments for more rigorous managerial controls on teaching, framed in terms of value for money and control of important aspects of educative practice, stealing its intrinsic value due to the 'acquisitiveness of the institution, in which the cooperative care of common goods of the practice is always vulnerable to the competitiveness of the institution' (2007: 194).

[5] MacIntyre also suggests that practices are grounded in their own tradition, so the providers (explicitly universities and farms) must change with them (see 2007: 222).

For an example, I have searched final policy discussion papers for the word 'good' and offered an integration of how it is used. I chose to do this as it allows a comparison of the detailed legal language of law used to codify policy ideas. In the United Kingdom, the paper 'Success for a Knowledge Economy' (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2016) sets out a range of reforms to higher education and the research system. In this document, the word 'good' is used nine times and, on two occasions, it is used twice in the same section. Its first use concerns 'good value for students' (11).[6] The next mention is as a qualifier— the 'good practice framework' (24)—and the others 'good negations' and 'good and excellent valuation' (32), 'good outcomes of teaching' and 'good quality teaching' (43), 'a good proxy for student engagement' and 'a reward for good performance', and once negatively, in 'teaching was not good enough' (46). In all cases, the word 'good' is used as an adjective, and its impact is reliant on the meaning assigned to 'good'. Higher education as a good, whether private or public, is not mentioned.

As this is an indicative investigation, to expand its reach I have taken two recent Australian government documents: 'Review of Research Policy and Funding Arrangements—Report' (November 2015) and 'Driving Innovation, Fairness and Excellence in Australian Higher Education' (May 2016). In the first, 'good' is used as an adjective, twice concerning 'good protocol' (58), and negatively, referring to metrics 'not being a good measure of knowledge' (71). In the second and much smaller report it is used in the same way three times: twice in response to 'good value for money' (11) and as 'a good deal for taxpayers' (18). Its third mention relates to 'reducing cost barriers to a good education' (16).

Indeed, I think that education passes an important test of inherent good in that it exists not only when it is desired but when it is merely present, and that it is regretted when absent. This sense of good makes it desirable, and there is choice over its intrinsic values: good or bad. If we explore this in a little depth, we are able to suggest that education as an institutionalised practice has the power to enhance private benefit, as well as public. It can be codified within certain curricula and delivered through providers, which can reflect meritocracy as well as privilege. It can be delivered by those who value the interrelatedness of a complex and detailed understanding of their subject at a level that transcends the skills of practice and is contextualised in the knowledges of humanity. This is achieved in forms of pedagogy that go beyond the reality of the inchoation of instrumental understanding to reach levels of enlightenment that, rather than easing the achievement of its commodified private good, see the skill and content of such an instumental understanding as problematic of the whole purpose of education.

Nevertheless, we still need two issues to be resolved. The first is, what are the bearers of intrinsic value? Can they be abstract as well as concrete, and how can we recognise that aspects of education practice are in such a state of affairs? It may be obvious that the provision of higher education, which has abstract properties of emancipation, justice and self-independence, might be

[6] Page numbers of the White Paper.

good in principle, but education only becomes an intrinsic good when there is a state of affairs that exemplifies these proprieties; that is, people who are more emancipated, have greater social mobility or are treated more justly. It is in the actual that the intrinsic value resides, not in the abstract imagining of the good, although this may have good-making properties. Thus, to know whether education is an intrinsic good, we need to know what the practice of higher education results in; that is, as Lemos states, 'that a certain state of affairs obtains' (2009: 20). In this sense, a form of higher education may have intrinsic value, based on the good properties that it advocates, yet the form of higher education practice that it provides may not be so defined.

So, to judge if higher education is intrinsically good, we need to know that those who engage in its practice possess the properties for which we might claim it is intrinsically good. At best, these seem difficult to sustain and, at worst, seem to indicate that the claim applies to individuals. This, of course, opens up questions of alternative provision of these good properties. Again, this does not state that there is no intrinsic good in higher education, even if other activities achieve the intrinsically good properties better, only that a blanket assumption that something desired and worthy but not achieved can have intrinsic value. Indeed, this is of critical importance to those who write on the future of higher education or critique the current state of affairs. I accept that it is feasible to devise an idea or ideal of the university as a state of affairs but, unless feasible and ultimately achievable, the properties themselves cannot be considered as intrinsically good. In this respect, UK higher education, for instance, is yet to show clear evidence that higher education provides this.

However, without such intrinsic values, the notion of education and its attributions as an inherent good is ruptured. This is the case with instruction, unlike education, as no intrinsic values are implied beyond the appropriate social benefits or where educative practices attempt to inchoate a specific way of life. In the first case, any educative practices involved in instruction are morally inactive and are instrumental, and in the second what values exist are intrinsically moribund, requiring the practices to be successfully instrumental, at best, and, at worst, negative for those involved. Society clearly has choices over the form of education that it wants and, as the above example of public versus private good illustrates, the shift has been toward self-interest. In so doing, it has taken the distinctiveness of educational providers away from a mission of societal support in the ways envisioned by Kant (2005b) in the *Conflict of the Faculties*.

Inherent good, not intrinsic good

Education as an intrinsic good is difficult to support, as it institutionalises practice, especially when paid for, which interweaves an external purpose whilst retaining an intent of personal transition, and it can enhance one's own well-being as well as that of others. I want therefore to suggest that higher education is inherently a good, for it cannot be wholly an intrinsic good when it is provided as a means to something else. It may retain properties of good if its intrinsic values are taught to enable an understanding of what society takes as good, in normative terms. Moreover, it retains this

inherent notion of good even when it does not promote intrinsic value but is conceived of as offering a good within the domain of normative expectation. It does not encourage the development and accumulation of knowledge for personal use in ways that can causally and directly harm others and, as a secondary consequence of its means to an end, the benefits may diffuse out to others in the longer term. The inherent good of higher education can then be found in its forms of education that constitute its practice— values such as seeking truth, critical reasoning, rationality and practical judgement, and understanding one's physicality. Educational practices bring potentiality to actualism in students in ways that require a recognition of the intrinsic value of education and recognition that to achieve them as the end goal there is value (inherent) in practices themselves.

The issues raised above have implication for how higher education providers are funded. Longden and Bélanger (2013) ask, 'should it be assumed axiomatically that university-level education should be under the direct control, regulation and funding of the State?' (ibid.: 501). Indeed, if we are unable to establish the intrinsic good of higher education, this seems an important question to ask rather than to allow what is public and private in education to be determined as a political–social construct. Yet, as we fail to conform to the notion of public, the critical goals of education in terms of purpose, ownership and access return to the elite. The elite have already found a way to enjoy the benefits of a system designed to offer open access through the ability to pay off debt and so not to incur loan interest payments. We need to retain the ever-diminishing notion of non-financial personal flourishing, not the commodification of knowledge and the experience as desire satisfaction, in which there can be little justification for government subsidies. Marginson (2007) makes a strong case for the public nature of knowledge, arguing that 'private goods depend on public goods nested in the institutional settings where value is created' (ibid.: 362). But is this what we should hope for from our policy-makers?

Conclusion

Maassen and Olsen (2007) have argued that the rate of change in higher education policy has accelerated in recent years, and this is having a number of impacts on the public good and the public trust invested in higher education. It seems likely that clarity will need to be sought through discussion of what good higher education has, and distinctively ask what it creates for society when we discuss the issues of democracy, justice and freedom in society. We need to recognise and act on the good of higher education and not to be seduced by the dominant policy discourse of personal power, wealth and pleasure as manifest in institutional providers. It is a question of whether private instrumental goods are allowed to play a dominant and destructive role in the overall institutionalisation of higher education which I have suggested should be a mix of all three forms of good discussed. To conflate them in such discussions as public and private good can mislead and debate and decision making.

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